

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2012 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release #21

Summer Announcement #17, District 4 Subsistence Salmon Fishing Schedule

Districts Affected: Upper Yukon Area

The Chinook salmon run continues to track considerably below historical averages. The Pilot Station sonar cumulative passage estimate of approximately 63,600 Chinook salmon through June 28 is well below the historical average of 105,000 for this date, and is also below the average passage estimates at this point for late run years, of approximately 78,000.

Consistent with preseason management strategies, subsistence fishing periods have already been cancelled in lower river districts and similar actions are being implemented in upriver fishing districts based on migratory timing of Chinook salmon. Based on the assessment information to date, additional measures are being taken to conserve Chinook salmon for escapement. In an effort to protect the first pulse as it passes through this long section of river, Subdistrict 4-A will be divided into two separate areas.

Subdistrict 4-A-Lower (from $\frac{3}{4}$ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Stink Creek): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik and Grayling. Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 4-A-Lower is currently closed and will remain closed for the period that was scheduled from 6:00 p.m. Sunday, July 1, until 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 3, to conserve Chinook salmon. The department will notify fishermen by July 2 concerning the next subsistence salmon fishing period and schedule for this lower portion of Subdistrict 4-A.

Subdistrict 4-A-Upper (from Stink Creek upstream to Cone Point): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk. Subdistrict 4-A-Upper is

currently on their regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule. By regulation, fisherman in Subdistrict 4-A may use drift gillnets during scheduled subsistence fishing periods on the mainstem of the Yukon River from June 10 to July 14. The 48-hour subsistence salmon fishing period scheduled to begin Sunday, July 1, will be reduced to a 24-hour subsistence salmon fishing period and gear restrictions are being implemented. Effective 6:00 p.m. Sunday, July 1, subsistence salmon fishing gear will be restricted to gillnets with 6-inch or smaller mesh size and fish wheels must be equipped with a chute and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must be returned to the water alive. Fish wheels must be closely attended while in operation. To conserve Chinook salmon, subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 4-A-Upper will close at 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 2, and will remain closed for the period that was scheduled from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 4, until 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 6. The department will notify fishermen by July 6 concerning the next subsistence salmon fishing period and schedule for this upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A.

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (from Cone Point to Illinois Creek): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Galena and Ruby. Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C are currently on their regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule which consists of two 48-hour periods each week from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 pm Fridays and from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays. To conserve Chinook salmon, subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C will close at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 3, and will remain closed for the period that was scheduled from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 4, until 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 6. The department will notify fishermen by July 6 concerning the next subsistence salmon fishing period and schedule for Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

State regulations do not allow the use of drift gillnets in State waters of Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C. Federal regulations allow the use of drift gillnets in Federal waters of Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C during open subsistence salmon fishing periods. Subsistence salmon fishermen should consult both State and Federal regulations before subsistence fishing. Subsistence fishermen wishing to utilize drift gillnet gear in these subdistricts should contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at (907) 656-1231 or (907) 455-1845 for the fishing schedule, permit requirements, and gear restrictions.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence salmon fishing continues to be open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day. Effective 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 3, gillnets will be restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

Fishermen in all of District 4 should stand by for short notice news releases regarding the subsistence salmon fishing closure to protect the first pulse of Chinook salmon as it passes through these subdistricts.

Recorded fishery announcements and updates will be available 24 hours a day at 949-1731 or 1-866-479-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the Emmonak ADF&G office at 949-1320, the Fairbanks ADF&G office at 459-7274, or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at 455-1845.

This has been an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.